E 338

THE Scattered Sheep

Sought after.

1. In a Lamentation over the general loſſe of the powerful preſence of God in his people, ſince the dayes of the Apoſtles, with a particular bewailing of the withering and death of thoſe precious buddings forth of life, which appeared in many at the beginning of the late troubles in theſe Nations, with the proper way of recovery for ſuch.
2. In ſome Propoſitions concerning the only way of ſalvation; where is an anſwer given to that great objection, That the light which convinceth of ſin, is the light of a natural conſcience; and a brief account rendred of the ground of mens miſunderſtanding Scriptures.
3. In expoſing to view the fundamental Principle of the Goſpel, upon which the redeemed Spirit is built.
4. And in ſome Queſtions and Anſwers, (by way of Catechiſm, for the ſake of the ſimple hearted) directing to that Principle, and fixing in it.

By *Iſaac Pennington.*

When Ephraim *ſpoke trembling, he exalted himſelf in* Iſrael; *but when he offended in* Baal, *he died. And now they ſin more and more,* &c. *Therefore they ſhall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew,* &c. Hoſ. 13. 1, 2, 3.

Yea his ſpring ſhall become drie, and his fountain ſhall be dried up, ver. 15.

We have all been as ſheep going aſtray; but bleſſed be the everlaſting Arm which hath gathered any of us to the Shepherd and Biſhop of our ſoul's.

O come to the fold, O ſcattered Sheep come to the fold: Wander no longer from mountain to hill, but remember your reſting place, the old reſting place of Iſrael, *even the mountain of the Lords houſe, where* Iſrael *may lie down and feed in peace, and no ravenous beaſt can diſturb.*

O louſe of Jacob *let whoredome, wine, and new wine, no longer ſteal away your hearts, but come let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

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The PREFACE,

MY people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no water. This was ever and anon the complaint of the Lord concerning Israel, *from the beginning to the end. The Lord did delight to beget, nourish, and bring up that people for himself; but they were almost continually revolting from him, and rebelling against him. He did mighty things for them, but they still forgot him. He redeemed them by his outstretched Arm, he fed them, he defended them, but they knew him not* (Isa. 1. 3.) *but decked themselves with the ornaments which they had from him, and then lift up the heel against him,* Ezek. 16. 7. &c. Deut. 32. 15. *In plain terms, they got what knowledge they could from him into their own vessels, and then they could set up for themselves, live of themselves, without fresh bublings up of life from the spring, from whence their knowledg came (the Priests said not, Where is the Lord? but could handle the Law, and teach the knowledge of it without him: and the Prophets could prophesie by another* Spirit, Jer. 2. 8.) *And thus the Lord God of life lived not in them, but they lived upon such things as once came from the life, but (being separated from the spring) were dead, and nourished but the dead part in them, the part estranged from God. And thus, though their professions were great, and they multiplied prayers, and sacrifices, and fasts, and drew nigh to God with their lips, yet their hearts were far from him. They had forsaken the Fountain, they drank not of the waters of the spring (of the rock that followed them) but they drank of the waters of their own Cisterns. They set up that knowledge of the Law for their light, which they had hewed out with the tools of their own understanding, without that spirit that wrote it. This was* Israels *error of old; they drank very zealously of the waters of the Law, but they drank it not from the spring, but out of the Cisterns which themselves had hewed.*

And as it was thus with Israel *of old, so hath it been with* Israel *since. The Christian* Israel *hath been alwaies back-sliding, alwaies forgetting the Lord; still getting what they could from him to live of themselves, but refusing to live on him: getting what knowledge they could from the Scriptures without him, getting what they could from their exercises and experiences, but neglecting the spring of their life. And so this* Israel

 also

alſo dies, this Iſrael *likewiſe withers, and becomes a ſcorn to the heathen: for though they ſpeak great words of their God, yet they themſelves are but as the heathen, uncircumciſed like them, unacquainted with the vertue & power of life like them, alwaies ſtriving againſt ſin in that which cannot conquer, and ſo they alſo are ſlaves under their luſts and corruptions, like the heathen, and know not the truth which makes free indeed.*

Exceeding great hath been the apoſtacy of this age. Mighty was the appearance of God inwardly in his peoples Spirits, mighty was the appearance of God outwardly in the Nation, many waies and great hopes there was of a thorow reformation. But how ſuddenly was the pure Spirit of the Lord forgotten, and departed from, and his work overturned both within and without; inwardly in his peoples ſpirits, and outwardly in the Nation, whoſe revolting was but a type of the inward. And how hath the Spirit of the Lord mourned after his people, often reproving them for their back-ſlidings: but they have been (as Iſrael *of old, like the deaf Adder) juſtifying themſelves, and complaining againſt the witneſſes of God (as* Iſrael *did againſt his Prophets) who from the* Lord *teſtifie againſt them. And it cannot be otherwiſe; for the dead waters in* Iſraels *hewen Ciſterns, will never agree with the waters of the living Fonntain, but will withſtand their teſtimony.*

How ſhall the charmer charm wiſely enough, to make apoſtate Iſrael *hearken to his voice! I have not back ſlidden, ſaith one in one form; I have not back-ſlidden, ſaith another in another form: I am not back-ſlidden ſaith one in one notion; I am not back ſlidden ſaith another, in another notion; I am believing, hoping, and waiting in what the* Lord *hath already revealed, and following on to know him. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeydſt not my word, but ſtill haſt been juſtifying thy ſelf, as if thou hadſt obeyed. And yet your back-ſlidings are written upon your foreheads, as with the point of a Diamond, for who among you retains his freſhneſſe? an evident demonſtration that ye are departed from the ſpring, and hold your knowledge, experiences, and hopes in the dead part, and your chiefeſt prop of comfort is the remembrance of what ye once had. Ah poor, barren, dead ſouls, is this your beſt ſupport? Return, return, enter into the houſe of mourning, and let the living lay it to heart.*

A Lamentation with a call to mourning and Lamentation, &c.

O *Israel*, the royal seed, the plant of renown, the living offspring of eternity; O daughter of *Sion*, who didst once shine with the beauty and glory of life, what is become of thee! how art thou held captive, and chained up in *Babylon*! how dost thou lie sullied among the pots! how are the wings of thy Dove clipped! how art thou covered, and polluted with the filth of the whole earth!

O take up a Lamentation, weep O *Israel*, mourn O daughter of *Jerusalem*, bewail thy widdow-hood, thy desolation, thy loss of Husband, thy sad captivity, thy banishment out of thine own land, and thy thraldom in the land of thine enemy.

What is become of thy God, the mighty God of *Jacob*, whose outstretched arme hath been able to save and redeem his seed out of bondage? What enemy hath been able to stand before him? What wild Boar out of the Wood, or wild Beast out of the Forrest, was able to break into his Vineyard, while he kept the fence? where is that arm that smote *Rahab*, and slew the *Dragon*? Where is that hook that he was wont to put into the nostrils of the *Leviathan*? *Pharaoh* is alive, the wise *Egyptians* have power, *Egypt* holds the seed in bondage, *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*, the *Philistins* with the inhabitants of *Tire*, are all able to smite *Israel*, and to stop up the well-springs of life. Awake O arm of the Lord, and awaken *Israel*, that thou again maist become his Saviour in the sight of all the Nations; and let all the house of *Israel*, being awakened, mourn in the Spirit of the Lord after the Lord.

What is become of thy *Messiah*, the Lords anointed, the Captain of the Lords hosts, the Angel of the Covenant of life, who was wont to go in and out before thee in fighting of the Lords battels, who was the Prince and Saviour in the land of peace and rest, who walked in the midst of the candlesticks, who was thy King thy shepherd thy temple wherein thou worshippedst, and the eternal light of thy life in the Land of the living?

What is become of that holy spirit which quickned thee to God, and

and which lived in thee being quickned? which kept thee alive in him that liveth, and made thee taste the sweetnesse of life continually? Where is the anointing, which suppled thee all over with the oyl of gladnesse and salvation? Where is the comforter, that refreshed thy spirit continually, and led thee into all truth, teaching thee all the things of God, according to thy measure of growth in the life? Where is the Spirit of thy Father, which Spirited thee with thy Fathers nature, which begot and brought forth the life, power, glory, majesty, eternity of thy Father in thee?

What is become of *Sion*, the holy Mount, whereon thou wast built? *Sion*, the fortresse of holinesse, where is it? What is become of *Jerusalem* the holy City, thy Mother whereof thou wast born? What is become of that Covenant of life, in whose womb thou wast begotten and brought forth, and by whose milk, and breath thou wast afterward nourished and brought up?

Where are all the fruits of the holy Land? the pleasant Grapes, the sweet Figs, the precious Olives, that yeelded Wine and Oyl to make the heart glad, and to refresh the countenance of the Lord of Life? Where's the joy in the Lord, the obedience to the Lord, the praying, the praising, the living, the walking in his Spirit, the entering into and bringing forth fruit in his pure understanding, and in his holy unspotted will and movings in the purified heart?

Alas, alas, *Babylon* hath prevailed, her King hath reigned, *Sion* hath been held in bonds, and that which hath sprung up under her name, hath been the filthy off spring of *Babylon*, the seed of the Mother of Harlots; and these have brought forth sower fruit, loathsome fruit, finely painted to the view of that eye which cannot search into it, but loathsom in its nature. This hath been the State of the apostacy since the daies of the Apostles, wherein that which hath not been of God hath reigned, and that which hath been of God hath suffered, and been reproached as if it had not been of God, and hath panted and mourned after the springing up of the spring of its life, and its gathering into it.

The deep sense of this hath afflicted my Soul from my tender years, the eternal witnesse awakening in me, and the eternal light manifesting the darknesse all along unto me, though I knew not that it was the light, but went about to measure its appearances in me, by words which it self had formerly spoken to others, and so set up my own understanding and comprehension as the measurer, although I did not then

then perceive or think that I did ſo. Thus continually (through ignorance) I ſlew the life, and ſold my ſelf for a thing of nothing, even for ſuch an appearance of life, as my underſtanding part could judge moſt agreeable to Scriptures. This the Lord blew upon, though its comlineſſe was unutterable (the life ſtill feeding my Spirit underneath, from whence ſprang an inward beauty and freſhneſſe:) then ſuch a day (or rather night) of darkneſſe and diſtreſſe overtook me, as would make the hardeſt heart melt to hear the relation of; yet the Lord was in that darkneſſe, and he preſerved me, and was forming of me to himſelf; and the taſte I had then of him, was far beyond what ever I had known in the pureſt ſtrains of my Religion formerly. And the Lord powerfully ſhut up my underſtanding, and preſerved my life from the betrayer. But yet that was not perfectly deſtroyed in me, upon which the Tempter might work: and the Lord ſuffered him to lay a ſnare, and my feet were intangled unawares, in ſo much as the ſimplicity was betrayed, and the fleſhly part grew wiſe by thoſe exerciſes wherewith the Lord had tried me. This poyſoned me, this hurt me, this ſtruck at the root of my life, and death inſenſibly grew upon me. The Devil (the envious ſeeds-man) couſened me with the Image, which before I had had in the truth, opening my underſtanding part (by the ſubtilty of temptation and deceit) which the Lord had been deſtroying; and letting that in, which the Lord had ſhut out: and then the Lord took away, and ſhut up from that part, that which before he had opened to the ſeed, whereby the way of life became ſtopped, and the way of death opened in a Myſtery. And then I could talk of univerſal love, of ſpiritual liberty, &c. and wait for the glorious appearance of life, having loſt that which formerly gave me the ſenſe of its nature: yea, at length I could ſeek to the creatures for what they could yeeld, and ſtrive to rub out the time of my miſery without the immediate preſence of the life of the Creator. And as for this deſpicable people (whom I now own in the Lord) I could meaſure them, I could fathome them: I could own their ſtanding, and yet ſee their ſhortneſſe, and could (with ſatisfaction to my ſpirit) write death upon them, as the end of that diſpenſation of life, into which I ſaw them entering, and in part entred. Here was my ſtanding, when the Lord drew his ſword upon me, and ſmote me in the very inmoſt of my ſoul: by which ſtroke (lying ſtill a while under it) my eyes came to be opened; and then I ſaw the blindneſſe of that eye, which was able to ſee ſo far, and the narrowneſſe of

that

that heart and ſpirit, which was ſo large and vaſt in comprehending: and my Soul bowed down to the Lord to ſlay this, to ſtarve this, to make a fool of this; yea my deſire was (to preſent ſence) as great after the death of this, as after the enjoyment of life in the Lord.

And now this hath opened a freſh ſpring of ſorrow in me, a mourning over the juſt one, which hath been ſlain by me. O how cruelly, how often have I murthered that, which came to give me life! how often have I ſought to have my own underſtanding, my own comprehenſion, my own will and affections in Religion live, and the righteous pure immortal principle die! though I did not then call it my own (as other men do not now) but took it to be of God, and to be the thing that was to live: for I alſo was deceived, and thought the Baſtard (which was a falſe conception) was to inherit not knowing him to be the Baſtard, but taking him for the right heir. And my ſoul is exceedingly enlarged in me towards thoſe, who at this day lie under the power of the ſame deceit, who have ſlain the Lord of life as well as I, and in whom the contrary nature lives under a covering; who cannot poſſibly ſee that this (which now lives in them) is not the heir until the ſame eye be opened in them.

The life that was ſtirring, at the beginning of the trouble of theſe Nations, was very precious: it did unite to God, it did unite to one another; it kindled an univerſal ſence of the captivity, of the bondage, of the great oppreſſion of *Iſrael*, and a joynt cry went up to God for deliverance. And God heard the cry, and aroſe to deliver, and did begin to break the yoke, both outwardly in the Nation, and inwardly in peoples ſpirits.

But then the tempter did alſo ſet himſelf at work, again to intangle *Iſrael*. For this end he brings forth likeneſſes of that which *Iſrael* deſired, and was ſeeking after. He brings forth ſeveral forms of worſhip to allure ſome with, ſeveral ſorts of notions to allure others with, ſeveral freſh appearances of life, of love, of liberty, to tempt the people of God aſide from following that ſpirit which roſe up to deliver. Thus comes he forth, and prevails: he divides in *Jacob*, and ſcatters in *Iſrael*; drawing one part to this form, another part towards that form; one to this Notion, another to that Notion; one to this inward Image, another to that ſpiritual Idol; and all from the life, all from the power, all from the Saviour, all from the deliverer: and ſo the work ſtops. It ſtops in the Nation, and it ſtops in peoples ſpirits, and men generally wheele about, and center again, and apply themſelves

themſelves to make Images like the Images they had deſtroyed: and ſo the Captivity returns, *Iſrael* is turned back into his bonds, and the Spirit which oppreſſed him before, again cruſheth him, and rules over him. And ſo great hath the breach been upon *Iſrael*, that the Spirit of the world is become hardened, and thinks there's an end of this work of God, and now they may venture again to ſettle both Church and State, upon the old Principles of that wiſdom which the Lord was ſhaking.

And now, where is the people whom the Lord was redeeming; where is the praying people, the panting people, the mourning people, the people that could have travelled from ſea to ſea to have had the will of God revealed? are they not run into the earth? is not the ſpirit of the earth come over them? are they not dividing the ſpoils? The inward Jew, the renewed nature is ſunk, loſt, made a prey of, the Gentile, the Heatheniſh Spirit hath riſen up, and ſeated it ſelf in a form of worſhip, or in ſome high Notions of knowledge, on which that Spirit (which knows not the Tree of life) loves to feed. Some are ſtark dead, no ſence at all in them, but life quite ſwallowed up of death. Others perhaps are ſtill preſſing towards the Kingdom, but in the wrong nature, in that which ſhall never obtain; and they may there meet with ſome enjoyments, but not enjoyments from or of the true thing, but of the likeneſſe which the enemy hath painted to deceive them with: and they may alſo wait and hope that the Kingdom will come, and yet be out of that which knows its coming, and can alone prepare the heart for its appearance. Yea ſome are got ſo high, that they are even in the Throne: They have the love, the life, the liberty, the joy, the peace of the Kingdom (as they imagine.) They can reign as Kings without us, without that nature and principle wherein our life lies. But theſe mighty ones, theſe Princes the Lord will pull from their ſeat, and raiſe up the humble, the meek, the low in heart, the beggar from the dunghil, and give to him the Throne of his glory.

Now this, my life in love ſaith to you all, as the proper and only way of your recovery and redemption, come to that which can judge you. *Sion is to be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteouſneſſe.* If *Sion* be redeemed, if the ſeed be again raiſed, that Spirit which hath got up above it (and keepeth it down) muſt be judged, and brought under by judgement. How was *Iſrael* of old to be recovered from her idolatries and whoredoms, but by

owning and coming to that light in the Prophets which manifested, and judged it? Ye also have worshiped Idols, ye also have run a whoring from the Lord, and have been inflamed with Idols under every green Tree. Every new Idol, every fresh appearance, every lively likeness hath tempted you aside from the living God. When one way of worship hath been dry and barren, ye have left that; when some notions of things have appeared empty and shallow, ye have been weary of them; but the next new Idol, under the next green Tree, hath drawn you aside into the bed of whoredom, where ye have lost true fellowship with the true God of life, and have been betrayed of the seed of life, which he began to quicken and raise from the dead. Now come to that which judgeth the Idol, the Idol-maker, the whorish Spirit which tempteth aside from the true husband, and that Spirit which is liable to be Tempted; and let these be cut down by the judgment, aud then the true seed of life will spring and flourish again. There is no other way, be not deceived. That must be awakened in you which can judge you, and must bring forth its judgment in you unto Victory, if life in you ever rise and get the dominion over death. And that Spirit which now rules in you (and keeps the life down) knows this very well, and therefore endeavours all it can, to keep you from owning judgement. He would faine keep the light in others from judging you, *Do not judge*, saith he, *All judgement is committed to the Son.* True, but shall not the light of the Son judge? shall not the light of that candle which the Lord hath lighted in one heart, discover and judg the darkness in another heart? Light doth make manifest, and its manifestation is its judgement, the uttering of the words are but the declaration of what the light in the heart hath done before, and cannot but do; for as long as it is light, where ever it come, it will and cannot but discover and judge the darkness it meets with, though the darkness cannot owne either its discovery or its judgment, but must needs except against it. Now if he cannot do this (which is utterly impossibly for the dark spirit to do) then, in the next place, he fortifies and hardens the heart, as much as he can, from receiving the judgement, by perswading him to look upon it as the judgement of another spirit like his own, and not as the judgement of the light, And so what *Paul* said concerning mans judgement (that it was a small matter to him to be judged by mans judgement) the same will he say concerning this judgement.

And

And yet, as the greateſt judgement of man, in the higheſt ſtrain of the comprehending part, ſhall fall: ſo the loweſt judgement of the light in the weakeſt child ſhall ſtand; and all the exalted ones of the earth ſhall in due time fall before it, though now (in the preſent elevation of their minds) they may riſe high above it, and trample it down. Therefore be not afraid to judge deceit. O ye weak ones, but be ſure that the light alone in you judge; and lie very low in the light, that that part, which the light in you judgeth in others, get not up in you, while the light is making uſe of you to judge it in others.

And now ye poor loſt ſouls (who find the need of judgment, and any willingneſs within you to embrace it) wait firſt, for the riſing of the Judge of Iſrael in your hearts, and in the next place wait for the joyning of your hearts to him; both which are to be done by his eternal light, which manifeſts and gives his life. In the loweſt ſhining of this light there is the judgement, and there is the King himſelf (who is not ſevered from the leaſt degree or meaſure of his own light) bow down to him, kiſs his feet; know the nature of the thing, and ſubject to it: worſhip him here in his humiliation, receive him in his ſtrokes, in his ſmitings (and obſerve, and turn from that in your ſelves which ſmites him) and ye ſhall one day ſee him in his majeſty, in the power of his love, in his everlaſting healings and embraces. And know aſſuredly, that that which will not worſhip him here, will not be fit to worſhip him there, nor ſhall not; but ſhall only tremble at the dread of his majeſty, and be confounded at the ſweetneſs of his love, but not be able to bow down to it in the true life. For that Spirit which is out of the life, is ſhut out in its higheſt deſires, hopes, attainments, enjoyments, ſeemingly ſpiritual reſt, univerſal love, liberty and peace, as well as in its darkeſt and groſſeſt paths of pollution. Therefore wait to know the nature of things, that ye may not be deceived with the higheſt, choiceſt, and moſt powerful appearances of death in the exacteſt image of life, nor ſtumble at true life in its loweſt and weakeſt appearance. And this ye can only attain to by a birth of, and growth up in the true wiſdome, which ſlaies that ſpirit which lives on the ſame things in the comprehenſion, and gathers a ſtock of knowledge and experiences in its own underſtanding

part. These are words of tender love, and they will also be words of true life, where the Fathers earth opens to drink them in, to whose good pleasure and blessing my soul commends them.

Some Propositions concerning the only way of Salvation.

1. *That there is no way of being saved from sin and wrath eternal, but by that Christ alone which died at Jerusalem.* There is no name, vertue, life, or power under heaven given, by which lost man may be saved, but his alone.

2. *That there is no way of being saved by him, but through receiving him into the heart by a living faith, and having him formed in the heart.* Christ saves not as he stands without at the door knocking, but as he is let in; and being let in, he brings in with him that life, power, and mercy which breaks down the wall of partition, unites to God, and saves. The Jews could not be saved formerly by belief of a Messiah to come (with the observation of all the Laws and Ordinances of *Moses*) nor can any now be saved by belief of a Christ already come (with observation of all that the Apostles Commanded or Practised) but alone by the receiving of him into the heart, who there works out the Salvation.

3. *That there is no way of receiving Christ into the heart, and of having him formed there, but by receiving the light of his spirit, in which light he is, and dwels:* Keep out the light of the spirit, keep out Christ; let in the light of the spirit, let in Christ: for the Father and the Son are light, and are alone known and received in the light, but never out of it.

4. *That the way of receiving the light of the spirit into the heart* (and thereby uniting with the Father and the Son) *is by hearkning to, and receiving its convictions of sin there.* The first operation of the spirit towards man lying in the sin, is to convince him of the sin: and he that receives not the convincing light of the spirit, the work is stopped in him at the very first; and Christ can never come to be formed in him, because that light, whereby he should be formed, is kept out. And then he may talk of Christ, and practise duties (pray, read, and meditate much) and gather comforts from promises, and run into Ordinances, and be exceeding zealous and affectionate in all these, and yet perish in the end.

You

Yea the Devil will let him alone (if not help him in all this) knowing that he hath him the surer thereby, he being (by the strict observation of these) kept out of the danger of his condition, which otherwise, perhaps, he might be made sensible of.

Object. *But I may be deceived in hearkning to a light within, for while I think that I therein hearken to the light of the Spirit, it may prove but the light of a natural conscience.*

Answ. 1. If it should be but the light of a natural Conscience, and it draw thee from sin (which separates from God) and so prepare thee for the understanding, believing, and receiving what the Scripture saith of Christ, this is no very bad deceit; but if in the result it should prove to have been the light of the Spirit, and thou all thy life time hast took it for the light of a natural conscience (and so hast despised, or at least neglected, if not reproached it) thou wilt then find that this was a very bad deceit.

2. I can shew thee by express Scripture, that it is the work of the spirit to convince of sin, *Joh.*16.8. And again, that the Law (which is spiritual) manifesteth that which is corrupt and carnal, *Rom.*7.14. But where canst thou shew me from Scripture, that a natural conscience can convince of sin?

3. Let any man give heed to the light in his heart, he shall find it to discover his most inward, his most secret, his most spiritual evils, which a natural light cannot do: for that which is natural cannot discover that which is spiritual.

4. The Apostle saith, That it is the grace which hath appeared to all men, which teacheth not only godlinesse, but also sobriety and righteousnesse, *Tit.*2.11,12. The light of the saine nature is darknesse, can teach nothing of God; what any man learns now of the true knowledg of God, he learns by grace, which shines in the darknesse of mans nature, to leaven it with the true knowledg, though man (being darknesse) can by no means comprehend it, and so cannot give it its true name.

Therefore take heed lest (through ignorance) ye blaspheme the holy light of the pure Spirit, calling that natural (looking on it with the carnal eye) which with the spiritual eye is seen to be spiritual. For thou that dost this, wilt be be also erring on the other hand, calling thy carnal meanings and conceivings (about the mind of the Spirit of God in Scripture) spiritual. And he that thus puts darknesse for light, must needs put light for darknesse; and

and then call evil good, and good evil: and ſo err from the Spirit of God in the whole courſe of his Religion, even in the moſt inward exerciſes of it.

Man by nature is dead in treſpaſſes and ſinnes, quite dead, and his conſcience wholly dark. That which giveth him the ſenſe of his death, and of his darkneſſe, muſt be another thing then his nature, even the light of the ſpirit of Chriſt, ſhining in his dark heart and conſcience. It is the ſeed of the woman which not only deſtroyes, but alſo diſcovers all the deeds of the Serpent. Now this ſeed, this light is one in all, though there have been ſeveral diſpenſations of it: One to the Heathen, in whom it ſprings up after an hidden manner, even as it were naturally, from whence it had the name of the *Light of Nature* (though it be the miſtery of life and ſalvation hid in them, *Col.* 1. 27. *this miſtery in the Gentiles*, it is ill tranſlated *among*:) another to the Jews, in whom it was more vigorouſly ſtirred up by a Law given, who by types, and ſhadows, and righteous exerciſes according to the Law, were to be awakened to the living principle, *Mich.* 6. 8. Another to the Chriſtians, in whom it was livelily brought forth to light and life, by an eſpecial diſpenſation of grace; in ſo much as that which was the *Miſtery in the Gentiles*, and vailed from the Jews, being opened in them, was found to be *Chriſt the hope*, Col. 1. 27. But under all theſe diſpenſations, the generality of men have fallen ſhort of the glory of God, and miſſed of the ſubſtance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the ſubſtance it ſelf, but under ſuch a vail as hides it from the eye of mans wiſdome, under what diſpenſation ſoever he be, and how high ſoever in that diſpenſation. To ſome it ſeems natural, to others legal; to ſome it ſeems from the power of Satan (or at leaſt they pretend ſo) to others it ſeems the miniſtry of *John Baptiſt*. Thus men gueſs at it in the wiſdome of their comprehenſions, waiting the true line and plummet to meaſure it by.

Now to you who have not waited to learn in the wiſdome of God the names of things (which there are given according to their nature) but in the forwardneſſe of your ſpirits, from your gathered knowledg, without the living power have ventured to call that natural, which in the eternal wiſdome is ſeen to be ſpiritual (and which hath been able to effect that, which all that knowledge which ye call ſpiritual, could never do) let me propoſe th conſide-

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ration of one Scripture to your Consciences in the sight of God.

The Scripture is that in *Job* 28. 12. to the end.

Where shall wisdome be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The deep saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, not in me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof, &c. Whence then cometh wisdome, and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of Heaven. Destruction and death say, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof, &c. And he said unto man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdome, and to depart from evil is understanding.

Now consider well:

First, Is this natural wisdome or spiritual wisdome that is thus precious? What is this that destruction and death have heard the fame of? Is it the wisdome of nature? or is it Christ the wisdome of God?

Secondly, Where is the place of this? where doth God point man to find this wisdome? He points him to the fear, *Unto man he said* (he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good) *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* Go to the fear, there it is taught, that is the wisdom: learn by the fear to depart from evil, that's the understanding. This is it which is so precious, which nothing can equalize or value, here is the place of it, thus it is to be learned. Sin overspreads all the land of darknesse, there is no fear of God before mens eyes there, there is no learning of the fear there, all the wisdom that man can come by, cannot teach it: he that learneth to fear God, to depart from evil, must learn of Christ the wisdom of God, and must deny all the varieties of the wisdome of men, which undertakes to teach it, but cannot.

Thirdly, What is that in every man which teacheth the fear? which teacheth to depart from evil? Every man hath in him an eye that sees the evil; what is that eye which the God of this world doth so strive to blind, and doth so generally blind? Every man hath in him an enemy to evil, one that never consented to it, but still reproves it, and fights against it, even in secret:

ſecret: what is this? This is no leſs then a ray from Chriſt the wiſdome of God, out of the ſeat of the fear in every heart, to lead into the fear, where the Law of departing from eniquity is learned; and ſo this ray, being harkned unto, and followed in the fear, brings up into the love, into the life, into the light, into the wiſdome, into the power. Do not ſhut your eyes now, O ye wiſe ones, but open your hearts, and let in that which knocks there, which can and will ſave you, being let in, and which alone can ſave you, For it is not a notion of a Chriſt without (with multitudes of practiſes of ſelf-denyal and mortification thereupon) which can ſave, but Chriſt heard knocking, and let into the heart. This will open the Scriptures aright; yea this is the true key, which will truly open words, things, and Spirits; but he that opens without this key, is a Thief and a Robber, and ſhall reſtore (in the day of Gods Judgment) all that he hath ſtollen; and woe to him, who when he is ſtripped of what he hath ſtollen, is found naked. The Scriptures were generally given forth to the people of God; part to the Jews, part to the Chriſtians. He that is born of the life, hath right unto them, and can read and underſtand them in the Spirit, which dwels in the life, But he that is not born of the Spirit, is but an intruder, and doth but ſteal other mens light, and other mens conditions and experiences into his carnal underſtanding, for which they were never intended, but only to be read and ſeen in that light which wrote them. And all theſe carnal apprehenſions of his (with all the faith, hope, love, knowledge, exerciſes, &c. which he hath gained into his Spirit hereby, with all his prayers, tears and faſts, and other limitations) will become loſs to him, (for he muſt be ſtripped of them all, and become ſo much the more naked) when God recovers his Scriptures from mans dark Spirit (which hath torn them, and exceedingly prophaned them with his conceivings, gueſſings, and imaginings) and reſtores them again to his people. The Prophets, and Apoſtles who wrote Scripture, firſt had the life in them; and he who underſtands their words, muſt firſt have the life in him. He that underſtands words of life, muſt firſt have life in himſelfe, And the life (from which the word came) is the meaſurer of the words, and not the words of the life. And when the Scripture is interpreted by the life and Spirit which penned it, there is then no more jangling and contending about it; for all this is out of the life, from, and in that Spirit, nature, and mind where the luſt, the enmity, the contention is, and not the unity, the love,

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the peace. But this is it which undoeth all, the dead spirit of man reads Scripture, and from that wisdome which is in the death (not knowing the mind of the Spirit) gives meanings: and from believing and practising the things there spoken of (which death may do, as well as speak of the same) gathers an hope that all shall be well at last for Christs sake, though it feel not the purification, the cleansing, the circumcision which cuts off the body of sin and death here (for it is not to be cut off hereafter) and so gives an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom, where the King of righteousnesse is seen, known, and worshiped in spirit.

The Fundamental Principle of the Gospel.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, 1 Joh. 1. 5.

This was the message which Christ gave his Apostles to make way into mens hearts by. This is the first thing that is proper for the mind to receive which lyes in the darknesse; namely, that there is no darknesse in God, nothing but light. Darknesse is excluded from him, and the mind that lies in darknesse cannot have union or fellowship with him: Therefore he that will be one with God, and partake of his life, must come out of the darknesse, which hath no place with God, into the light where God is, and in which he dwels.

The work of the Son is to reveal the Father, and to draw to the Father. He reveals him as light (as the spring of light, as the fountain of light) and he draws to him as light. When he gives to his Apostles the standing message whereby they were to make him known to the world, and whereby men were to come into fellowship and acquaintance with him, this is it, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

Christ Jesus, the Son of God, he is the image of his substance, the exact image of this light, *the light of the world*, who is to light the world unto this substance. So that as God the Father is to be known as light, so Christ the Son also is to be known as light. He is the only begotten of the Father of lights, the alone image wherein the eternal substance is revealed and made known. And he that receives this image, receives the substance; and he that receives not this Image receives not the substance.

Now there is a breath or spirit from this substance in this Image, which draws to this Image (thus the Father draws to the Son) and the Image again draws to the substance (thus the Son draws to the Father)

And so hearkning to this breath, the mind and soul is led out of the darkneſſe into the Image of light (which is the Son) and by the Image into the ſubſtance: and heres the fellowſhip which the Goſpel invites to. Joyning to this breath, being transformed by this breath, living in this breath, walking in this holy inſpiration, there's an unity with the Father and the Son, who themſelves dwell in this breath, from whom this breath comes, in whom this breath is, and in whom all are who are one with this breath.

This breath purgeth out the dark breath, the dark air, the dark power, the miſtery of death and darkneſſe, and fils with the breath of light, with the breath of life, with the living power, with the holy pure miſtery.

Now as the Father is light, and the Son light, ſo this breath, this ſpirit which proceeds from them both, is light alſo. And as the Father who is light, can alone be revealed by the Son who is light: ſo the Son who is light, can alone be revealed by the ſpirit who is light.

He then who hears this meſſage, that God is light, and feeleth himſelf darkneſſe and in darkneſſe, and is willing to be drawn out of the darkneſſe, into fellowſhip with God who is light: This is requiſite for him to know, namely, how he may be drawn out, who it is that draws, and which are the drawings, that he may not reſiſt or neglect them (waiting for another thing) and ſo miſſe of the true and only paſſage unto life. Wherefore obſerve this heedfully.

None can draw to the Father but the Son: none can draw to the Son but the Father: and both theſe alone draw by the ſpirit. The Father by his Spirit draws to the Son, and the Son by the ſame ſpirit draws to the Father: and they both draw by the ſpirit as he is light, as he is their light lighted to that end. For as the Father is light, and the Son light, ſo that Spirit which draws to them, muſt be light alſo. He is indeed the breath of light, eternally lighted, to draw to the eternal Image of light, and then to the eternal ſubſtance, which eternally dwels in that eternal Image.

Q. *But how may I know the Spirit and its operations, that I may follow him, and be led by him, both to the Son and to the Father, and ſo come into the everlaſting fellowſhip?*

A. The Spirit is to be known by thoſe motions & operations which are proper to him, which flow alone from him, and from nothing elſe.

Q. *What are they?*

A. Convincing of ſin, and reproving for ſin, which nothing can truly

truly discover and reprove but the light of the Spirit. Darkness can not make manifest darkness, but whatsoever maketh manifest is light. All the discoveries of darkness in the hidden world of the heart, are from Christ the Sun of Righteousness, by his Spirit, what name soever men may give it, who know not this Sun, nor its light, nor the true names of things in the light, but have named even the things of God in the dark, and according to the dark apprehensions and conceptions of their own imaginary mind. But this I say to such as are so ready to beat their brains and dispute, leave contending about names, come to the thing, come to that which reproves thee in secret, follow the light that thus checks and draws; be diligent, be faithful, be obedient; thou shalt find this lead thee to that, which all thy knowledg out of this (even all that which thou calleſt Spiritual light) will never be able to lead thee.

And when thou art joyned to this light, it will shew thee him whom thou hast pierced (even so as never yet thou sawest him) and open a fresh vain of blood and grief in thee, to bleed and mourn over him; and work that repentance in thee, which thou never wast acquainted with before; and teach thee that faith, to which yet thou art a stranger; and teach thee that self-denyal, which will reach to the very root of that nature which yet lives, even under that, and by means of that which thou calleſt spiritual light; and will lay such an yoke on thy neck, as the unrighteous one is not able to bear, yea such an one as the hypocrite (which is able to hide it self under confessions of sin and forms of zeal, knowledg, devotion and worship) shall be daily tormented and wasted with. And then thou shalt know what it is to wait upon God in the way of his judgments, and find the powers of life and death striving for thy soul, and daily floods and stormes encompassing and attending thee, under which thou wilt assuredly fall and perish, unless the everlasting arm of Gods power be stretched out for thee, and be continually redeeming thee. And then thou wilt feel and see how sin is pardoned, and how it is bound; how death brake in upon *Adam*, and how it daily breaks in upon mankind; and what that standard is, which the spirit of the Lord lifteth up against the powers of darkness. And then thou wilt come clearly to perceive how that which thou hast called religion formerly (which flowed not from this principle) hath been but the invention of thine own imaginary mind (though thou fatheredst it upon the Scriptures, as most men do most of their inventions about Doctrine and Worship)

wherein thou hast been in a dream of being changed, and yet remainest still the same in nature, and hast had a name that thou hast lived, but art still dead; a name of being sanctified, but still uncleane; a name of being justified, but still condemned by the light in thine own conscience, which is one with him who is thy Judge, and who will judge according to it. And so, as that which is real taketh place in thee, so that which hath been but imaginary will passe away.

A short Catechism, for the sake of the simple-hearted.

Quest. *WHat is the estate and condition of all men by nature, as they are begotten of the seed of the evil doer, and come out of the loyns of the first* Adam?

Answ. A state of sin and darknesse, a state of death and misery, a state of enmity against God, a state accursed from God, exposed to his wrath and most righteous judgments, both here and hereafter.

Q. *What brought* Adam *to this estate? and what keeps the sons of* Adam *in it?*

A. Feeding on the tree of knowledg, from which man is not excluded to this day, though he is from the tree of life.

Q. *How came* Adam *at first, and how come men still to feed on the tree of knowledg?*

A. From a lustful appetite and desire after the forbidden wisdom, sown in their hearts by the envious enemy of their souls, who is continually twining about this tree, and tempting men and women to eat of it, perswading them that the fruit thereof is good for food: and indeed it is very desirable to their eye, and promiseth fair to make them everlastingly wise, but still faileth.

Q. *What is the forbidden fruit?*

A. It is knowledg without life, knowledg in the earthly part, knowledg acquired from below, not given from above. This promiseth to make men as God, and to give them the ability of discerning and distinguishing between good and evil, which is Gods peculiar property. Eating of this fruit undid *Adam*, undid the Gentiles, undid the Jews, undid the Christians, they all feeding on the tree of knowledg, and departing from the life in their several dispensations.

Q. *How doth this fruit undo man?*

A. The wisdom and knowledg (which they thus gather and feed upon) perverts them, makes them wise in the wrong part, exalts them

them against the life, duls the true appetite, and increases the wrong appetite, in so much as that there is not so much as a desire in them after God in truth, but only to get knowledg and wisdom from what they can comprehend. By this means whatsoever was afterwards ordained to life, became death to man. Thus the Gentiles liked not to retain God in their knowledg, but fell by their dispensation, provoking God to cast them off, and give them up to the vanity of their imaginations. And thus the Jews (whom God then chose) fell likewise by their dispensation, God for this cause giving them up to their own hearts lusts, and rejecting them from being a people. And the Gentiles (whom God ingrafted into the true Olive, in the Jews stead) they also after the same manner fell by their dispensation. Thus each of these fell by gathering wisdom from the letter, but missing of the life in every of these dispensations.

Q. *What is the food which man should feed on?*

A. The tree of life, the word which liveth and abideth for ever, which is in the midst of the garden of God, which word was made flesh for mans weakness sake, on which flesh the living soul feeds, and whose blood the living spirit drinks, and so is nourished up to eternal life.

Q. *But had* Adam *this food to feed on? and was this to be the food of the Gentiles, Jews and Christians in their several dispensations?*

A. God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul: and nothing lesse then life it self could satisfie his soul at first, nor can to this day. Every word of God that cometh fresh out of his mouth, is mans food and life. And God speaketh often to man, shewing him what is good, but he cannot relish or feed on this, but desireth somewhat else, through the error and alienation of his mind. And what God speaketh now to man (if that be mans life) *Adam* had much more of it before his fall. And for the Jews, *Moses* tells them the word was nigh them, in their heart, and in their mouth: and *Paul* also tels the Christians so. So that the word is not far from any man, but mens ears are generally stopped against it, by the subtilty of the serpent, which at first deceived them.

Q. *But did not the Jews seek for eternal life, in reading and studying the Scriptures under their dispensation? and do not the Christians now seek for life, and to feed on life?*

A. Yea they did, and do in their own way, but they refuse it in Gods

Gods way. Thus *Adam* after he had eat of the tree of knowledg, would have fed on the tree of life also, but he was shut out then, and so are Christians now. And if ever they will feed on the tree of life, they must loose their knowledge, they must be made blind, and be led to it by a way that they know not.

Q. *This is too misterious for me, give me the plain literal knowledg of the Scriptures.*

A. Is not the substance a mystery? is not the life there? The letter of any dispensation killeth: it is the spirit alone that giveth life. A man may read the letter of the Scripture diligently and gather a large knowledg therefrom, and feed greedily thereon, but it is only the dead spirit which so feeds, but the soul underneath is lean, barren, hungry and unsatisfied, which when it awakes, it will feel.

Q. *But may not the dead spirit ar well imagine mysteries in every thing, and feed thereon?*

A. Yea it may, and the error here is greater then the former: but in waiting in the humilty and fear, to have the true eye opened, and the true mystery revealed to the humble and honest heart, and in receiving of that in the demonstration of the spirit, out of the wisdom of the flesh, here is no error, but the true knowledge, which springs from life, and brings life.

Q. *How may I come at this mystery?*

A. There is but one key can open it, but one hand can turn that key, and but one vessel, but one heart, but one spirit, which can receive the knowledge.

Q. *How may I come by that heart?*

A. As thou being touched with the enemy didst let him in, and didst not thrust him by with the power of that life which was stronger then he, and nearer to thee. Even so now, when thou art touched and drawn by thy friend, (who is nigh) and thereby findest the beginning of vertue entering into thee, give up in and by that life and vertue, and wait for more; and still as thou feelest that following, calling, and growing upon thee; follow on in it, and it will lead thee in a wonderful way out of the land of death and darkness, where thy soul hath been a captive, into the land of life and perfect liberty.

Q. *But can I do any thing toward my own salvation?*

A. Of thy self thou canst not, but in the power of him that worketh both to will and to do, thou mayst do a little at first: and as that power grows in thee, thou wilt be able to will more, and to do more,

even

even until nothing become too hard for thee. And when thou hast conquered all, suffered all, performed all, thou shalt see, and be able understandingly to say, Thou hast done nothing, but the eternal virtue, life and power hath wrought all in thee.

Q. *I perceive, by what is said, that there is a Saviour, one which hath virtue, life and power in him to save, but how may I meet with him?*

A. Yea, he that made man pitieth him, and is not willing that he should perish in the pit into which he fell, but hath appointed one to draw him out, and save him.

Q. *Who is this Saviour?*

A. He is the Tree of Life I have spoken of all this while, whose leaves have virtue in them to heal the Nations. He is the plant of righteousnesse, the plant of Gods right hand (hast thou ever known such a plant in thee, planted there by the right hand of God?) He is the Resurrection and the Life, which raiseth the dead soul, and causeth it to live. He is the spiritual Manna, whereupon the quickned soul feeds. Yea, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, which he that is raised up in the life feeds on, and findeth the living vertue in them which satisfieth and nourisheth up his immortal soul.

Q. *But hath not this Saviour a name? What is his name?*

A. It were better for thee to learn his name by feeling his vertue and power in thy heart, then by rote. Yet (if thou canst receive it) this is his name, *The light, the light of the World*, (a light to enlighten the Gentiles, that he may convert and make them Gods *Israel*, and become their glory.) And according to his Office, he hath enlightned every man that cometh into the world, though men neither know the light that cometh from him, nor him from whom the light comes; and so notwithstanding the light is so neat them, remain strangers to it, and unsaved by it.

Q. *Why dost thou call him the light? are there not other names every whit as proper, whereby he may as well be known?*

A. Do not thus let up the wise and stumbling part in thee, but mind the thing, which first puts forth its virtue as light, and so is thus first to be known, owned, and received. Yet more particularly, if thou hast wherewith, consider this reason: We call him light, because the father of lights hath peculiarly chosen this name for him, to make him known to his people in this age by, and hath thus made him manifest to us. And by thus receiving him, under this name,

we

we come to know his other names. He is the life, the righteousnesse, the power, the wisdom, the peace, &c. but he is all these in the light, and in the light we learn and receive them all: and they are none of them to be known in spirit, but in and by the light.

Q. *How are the other names of Christ known in and by the light?*

A. Letting in the light (which convinceth of, and warreth against sin) the life stirs and is felt, and the life leads to the word which was in the beginning, and gives the feeling of that also. And in the word, the righteousnesse, the peace, the wisdom, the power, the love is felt; and he is made all these to those who are led into, and kept in the light. And when the powers of darknesse appear with mighty dread, and there is no strength to withstand them, this lifts up a standard against them, and calms all the tempests, and cures all the wounds and diseases of the soul, anointing it with the everlasting oil, so that now I can sensibly, and with clear understanding call it my Saviour, the Captain of my salvation, my Christ or anointed, my Husband, my King, my Lord, my God.

Q. *Where doth this light shine?*

A. In the darknesse at first: but when it hath vanquished, expelled and dispersed the darknesse, it shines out of it.

Q. *What is that darkness wherein the light shines?*

A. Man: mans heart, mans conscience, mans spirit. This is the world, which Christ the Sun of righteousnesse is the light of, in every part whereof he causeth the rayes or beams of his light to shine at his pleasure, though in no part the darknesse can comprehend the least shining of his light?

Q. *How then can it ever be converted thereby?*

A. The darknesse is not to be converted. Every man in this state is reprobated, and the wrath abideth on him. So that the darknesse is rejected, and man in the darknesse; but man touched by the light, made sensible of it, and following it in the life and power which it begets, is drawn out of the horrible pit, and saved.

Q. *How may I do to find the light in the midst of the darkness of my heart, which is so great, and this seed so small?*

A. By its discovering and warring against the darknesse. There is somewhat which discovereth both the open and secret iniquity of the corrupt heart, following it under all its coverings of zeal, holinesse, and all manner of voluntary humility, and self righteousnesse (with which

which the true light never had unity) and sometimes may cause secret misgivings that all is not well, but there may be a flaw found in this covering, and in the end it may prove too narrow for the soul. This which thus warreth against the darkness, to bring people off from all false foundations, to the true and living foundation, this is the light, and thus thou maist find it, at some time or other at work in thy heart, if thou mind it.

Q. *Having found the light, how may I come to feel the saving vertue and power of it?*

A. By believing in it. For the vertue and power springs up in the heart that believes in it.

Q. *How can I believe in it, am not I dead?*

A. There is a creating, a quickning power in the light, which begets a little life, and that can answer the voice of the living power.

Q. *Yea, If I could finde any such thing begotten in me, then I might be drawn to assent that that (though never so small) might believe, but surely my dead heart never can.*

A. Hast thou never found a true honest breathing towards God? hast thou never found sin, not an imaginary, but a real burthen? This was from life; there was somewhat begotten of God in thee, which felt this: It was not flesh & blood in thee, but somwhat from above. And if this had known the spring of its life, and not been deceived from it by the subtilty, it would have fed upon, and have grown up in the vertue and power of the spring, from whence its life came.

Q. *Why then, by this, all men have power to believe.*

A. In the light which shines in all, and visits all, there is the power: and this power strives with the creature to work it self into the creature; and where there hath been the least breathing after life, there hath been a taste of the power: for this came from it. But the great deceiver of souls, lifts up mens mind in the imagination, to look for some great appearance of power, and so they slight and overlook the day of small things, and neglect receiving the beginnings of that, which in the issue would be the thing they look for. Waiting in that which is low and little in the heart, the power enters, the seed grows, the Kingdom is felt, and daily more and more revealed in the power. And this is the true way and door to the thing, take heed of climbing over it.

Q. *What is it to believe in the light?*

A. To receive its testimony either concerning good or evil: and

so either to turn towards or from, in the will and power which the light begets in the heart.

Q. *How will this save me?*

A. By this means, that in thee which destroys thee (and separates thee from the living God) is daily wrought out, and the heart daily changed into the Image of him who is light, and brought into unity and fellowship with the light, possessing of it, and being possessed by it, and this is Salvation.

Q. *We thought salvation had been a thing to be bestowed hereafter, after the death of the body: but if it be thus, then salvation is wrought out here.*

A. So it is, even in all that are saved: for there is no working of it out hereafter, but here it is wrought out with fear and trembling, and the believer (who is truly in unity with the life) daily changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Q. *But shew more particularly, how Faith or believing in the light worketh out the Salvation.*

A. First, it causeth a fear and trembling to seize upon the sinner. The Lord God Almighty, by the rising of his light in the heart, causeth the powers of darkness to shake, the earth to tremble, the hills and mountains to melt, and the goodly fruit-Trees to cast their fruit. And then the plant of the Lord springs up out of the dry and barren ground, which by the dews and showers from above, thrives, grows, and spreads till it fills Gods earth.

2. In this fear and trembling, the work of true repentantance and conversion is begun and carried on. There is a turning of the Soul from the darkness to the light; from the dark power to the power of light; from the spirit of deceit, to the Spirit of truth, from all false appearances and imaginations about holiness, to that which the eternal light manifesteth to be truly so. And now is a time of mourning, of deep mourning, while the separtion is working, while the enemies strength is not broken and subdued, and while the heart is now and then feeling it self, still hankering after its old lovers.

3. In the belief of the light, and in the fear placed in the heart, there springs up an hope, a living hope in the living principle, which hath manifested it self and begun to work. For the Soul truly turning to the light, the everlasting Arm, the living power is felt: and the Anchor being felt, it staies the soul in all the tossings, troubles, storms, and tempests it meets with afterwards, which are many, yea very many.

4 Faith,

4. Faith, through the hope works righteousnesse, and teaches the true wisdom (and now the benefit of all the former trouble, anguish and misery begins to be felt, and the work goes on sweetly.) All unrighteousnes is in the darknesse, in the unbelief, in the false hope; faith in the light works out the unrighteousnesse, and works in the righteousnesse of God in Christ. And it makes truly wise, wise in the living power, even wise against the evil and to the good, which no man can learn elsewhere.

5. In the righteousnesse, and in the true wisdome which is received in the light, there springs up a love, and an unity and fellowship with God the Father of lights, and with all who are children of the light. Being begotten by Christ the light, into the nature of the light, and brought forth in the Image, there is an unity soon felt with God the Father, and with those who are born of the same womb, and partake of the same nature. And here is a willingnesse and power felt in this love, to lay down the life, even for the least truth of Christs, or for the brethren.

6. Belief in the light works patience, meeknesse, gentlenesse, tenderness and long suffering. It will bear any thing for God, any thing for mens souls sake. It will wait quietly and stilly for the carrying on of the work of God in its own soul, and for the manifestation of Gods love and mercy to others. It will bear the contradiction and reproach of sinners, seeking their good, even while they are plotting, contriving and hatching mischief, laying many subtil snares, and longing thereby to entrap the innocent.

7. It brings peace, joy, and glory. Faith in the light breaks down the wall of darknesse, the wall of Partition, that which separates from the peace, that which causeth the anguish and trouble upon the soul, and so brings into peace. Christ is the skilful Physitian, he cures the disease by removing the cause. The unskilful Physitians they heale deceitfully, crying peace, peace, while there is no peace, while that which breaks the peace is standing; but Christ doth not so, but slaies the enmity in the heart by the blood of his crosse, so making peace. And this is true peace certain peace.

Now finding the clods of earth removed, the enemy, the disturber, the peace-breaker trodden down, the sin taken away, the life & power present, the soul brought into the peace, here's joy, unspeakable joy, joy which the world cannot see or touch, nor the powers of darknesse come neer to interrupt. Here's now no more crying out, *O wretched*

man: and who shall deliver, &c. but a rejoycing in him who hath given victory, and made the soul a conqueror, yea more then a conqueror. Wait to feel that, thou who art now groaning, and oppressed by the mercilesse powers of darknesse. And this joy is full of glory, which glory increaseth daily more and more, by the daily sight and feeling of the living vertue and power in Christ the light, whereby the soul is continually transformed (and changed more and more) out of the corruptible, into the incorruptible; out of the uncircumcision, the shame, the reproach, into the circumcision, the life, the glory.

Q. *Doth the light do all this?*

A. Yea, in them that turn towards it, give up to it, and abide in it. In them it cleanseth out the thicknesse, and darknesse, and daily transformeth them into the image, purity and perfection of the light. And this nothing can do but the light alone.

Q. *What makes men generally so averse from the light?*

A. Their unity with the darknesse, which the light is an enemy to, discovering and disturbing it.

Q. *But wise men, knowing men (men who are looked upon as having most light) they also are enemies to this light, and speak hardly of it.*

A. Was it not alwayes so? Did any of the Rulers or wise Scribes and Teachers of the Law believe in him formerly? and is it any wonder if such believe not in him now?

Q. *What may be the reason, why the wise men formerly have not, and now cannot believe in the light?*

A. There are two great reasons for it:

1. Because they cannot comprehend it. They can comprehend the knowledg which they can gather out of the book of Nature, or out of the books of the Law and Prophets, or out of the books of the Evangelists and Apostles, but they cannot comprehend the light which all these testifie of (so that such a kind of knowledg they can receive, but the light they cannot) for it is not to be comprehended, but gathereth into it self, and comprehendeth.

2. Because it is an utter enemy to them. It will not wink at the closest of their evils, nor speak peace to them therein. Their own gathered knowledg may speak peace to them, but this will not. Thus the Jews could speak peace to themselves, from their Temple, Ordinances and Sactifices, though they walked in the stubbornes and uncircumcision of their hearts, resisting the checks and motions of the holy spirit there: & thus the Christians can speak peace to themselvs, from a belief

lief and hope through Christs dying at *Jerusalem* (though they know not him in them, and are at a distance, and not one with that in their hearts which is of Christ, and in his power and authority checks and reproves for sin) but the light will not speak peace so, but only where the vertue of the living blood is felt, cleansing away the sin.

Q. *But there are many professors, strict professors (who, without doubt have once tasted of the living virtue) what makes them such enemies to the light? for there are none speaks more against it then they.*

A. 1. Because they are fallen from what they once had, for if they were in that living principle, which once gave them a true taste of life through the Scriptures, they could not but know & own the light, which was the thing which gave them the taste, and would have preserved their relish, had they known how to turn to it, and abide in it.

2. The light is a witnesse against all their knowledg and religious practises & imitations from the Scripture, which they hold & practise out of the light, in the unrighteousnesse, even in that part which is not to know or be the worshipper. And can ye blame them, that when the light is so great an enemy to them, that they also turn head against it? How is it possible, that having slain and murdered the just one in themselves, they should acknowledg and give him his due honour in others?

Q. *But have the strict professors, who pretend great things in honour of Christ, murthered him in themselves?*

A. Yea verily, as really as the Scribes, Pharisees and people of the Jews put him to death at *Jerusalem*: for what they do to the least appearance of his light in their hearts, they do it unto him: Yea, our Lord Christ at this very day, is as really crucified in their spiritual *Egypt* and *Sodom*, as he was without the gates of *Jerusalem*; and his righteous blood cries as loud against the professors of this age, as ever it did against the Jews: and they are hardned against him by a conceited knowledg, which by their imaginations they have gathered from the Scriptures, just as the Jews were, but the eye in them can no more see it, then the eye in the Jews could.

Q. *Surely if they knew the light to be the only living way, they would not be such enemies to it.*

A. Yea I believe concerning them (as was said concerning the Jews) that if they knew it, they would not crucifie the Lord of glory: for I bear many of them record, that they have a great zeal, though not according to knowledg. But at present very sad is their state; for the God of the world hath blinded that eye in them, which alone can see

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the truth; and with that eye, wherewith they now strive to see, they shall never see with comfort. Yea, so exceeding gross and thick are many of them become, and their hearts so fat, that in stead of feeling the want of the spirit of God in themselves, and mourning after it, they can mock at the appearances of it in others, and speak contemptibly of a light within, where Christ saith the light is: For, saith Christ, Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness, for if, &c.

Q. *But will not they reply, that they do not oppose (much less mock at) the light of the spirit, but only that which ye ignorantly call the light of the spirit?*

A. If we have found it to be the light of the spirit, and to work that in us and for us, which no other light ever could, do not blame us for giving in our testimony that it is that light. And take heed how ye reproach us with ignorance, seeing many of us have passed through all that which ye call knowledg: but our light is a new and strange thing to you, and ye are not yet able to judge it.

Q. *But may not men obtain eternal life by reading the Scriptures, without knowing or owning this principle of the light?*

A. The true end of mens reading the Scriptures, is to turn them to the light. The Scriptures contain messages concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning the Spirit, the end whereof is to turn men to the power and life, which can do the thing for them: which God, which Christ, which Spirit fill all things, and are within in the heart, as well as without. The word is nigh thee, in thy heart, and in thy mouth, saith *Moses* to the Jews, saith *Paul* to the Christians. And to what end do they tell them it is there? but that there they should wait upon it, to hear its voice, and to obey it. Now mark, though men could practise and perform all things mentioned in the Scripture, yet not being turned to this, they are not in the way of salvation: for the way of salvation is not a particular path or course of Ordinances and duties prescribed in the Scriptures, but it is a new way, a living way, a way that the wisest professors, out of it never knew (I will lead them in paths they have not known.) So that while men know not, nor are not turned to the light and power whereof the Scriptures testifie, all their reading of the Scriptures, praying and practising Ordinances and duties there mentioned, are but in vain, and in the end will prove but a false covering, and not the covering of the spirit.

Q. *But how did men do formerly? for this is but a late notion about the light; have none ever been saved that have not embraced this notion?*

A. I

A. I speak not of embracing a notion, but of turning to the thing it self, whithout which none ever was, or can be saved: for it is that alone can save, and it saves only them that are turned to it. Now if any man so read the Scriptures, as thereby to learn to turn to this, he may feel that which will work salvation in him, though he know not its name. For as darkneſſe, being turned to, works death in a miſtery, though its name be not known, but it may appear and be taken for light; ſo light being turned to, works life in a miſtery, although he in whom it works, ſhould not be able to call it by its name.

Q. *Then by this, a man may be ſaved, though he ſhould not know the litteral name Jeſus, or the litteral name Chriſt, &c.*

A. The names are but the ſignification of the things ſpoken of, for it is the life, the power (the being transformed by that) that ſaves, not the knowledg of a name. And Chriſtians mightily deceive themſelves herein, for they think to be ſaved by believing a relation concerning Chriſt, as he appeared in a fleſhly body, and ſuffered death at *Jeruſalem*. Whereas Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever: and the ſaving knowledg reveals him, not only as he was then, but as he was the day before, and as he will be for ever. And this knowledg is alſo revealed in the Scripture, but they are ſo drowned in the Letter, wherewith the carnal part is ſo filled, that the ſpiritual eye cannot open in them to ſee: and ſo that which was ordained for life, becomes death to them, and they periſh, they periſh juſt as the Jews did: for their eyes are with held by a wiſdom which they have grown up in from the Letter, from the beholding the miſtery of life in the ſpirit, which alone can work out, and ſave from the miſtery of death.

Q. *But did not God formerly work life in men by their reading of the Scriptures, and by the preaching of ſuch godly Miniſters, as are now deſpiſed, and counted Antichriſtian?*

A. When men read the Scriptures formerly in the times of thick darkneſſe, and when ſome of thoſe (who were not made Miniſters according to the order of the Goſpel) preached in the ſimplicity of their hearts, according to the beſt light of their feeling and experience, the Lord pitied the ſimplicity of their hearts, and ſecretly refreſhed this principle in them by ſuch reading, and by ſuch preaching. But now this principle is made manifeſt, their reading and ſetting up a knowledg of the Scriptures without this (which was the thing even then from whence they had their life) yea in oppoſition to this, this increaſeth their death and bondage, and ſhuts them out of life.

Q. *Will*

Q. *Well I will keep to the Scriptures, and wait for light there, let who will follow this new light.*

A. Wilt thou keep to the Scriptures in opposition to that light, which alone can give thee the knowledg of the Scriptures? what kind of knowledg wilt thou gather from the Scriptures? Not a knowledge which will humble thee, and cleanse thy heart; but a knowledg which will puff thee up, and fit thee for the slaughter. While thou art from the light, thou canst not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God, but art exalting thine own imaginations, conceivings, and reasonings about the sense of Scriptures. And this thou wilt one day know with sorrow, when God calls thee to an account for thy boldnesse, in putting senses and meanings upon his words without his light.

Q. *I am almost startled?*

A. Many have fallen, and more must fall: for the sharp Axe of the Lord is preparrd to cut down every professor, with all his profession and religious practises & imitations from Scripture, which stand not in the pure life. Happy art thou, if thou now fall by that hand, which now strikes at many in great loving kindnesse and mercy, that he might raise them up again, and fix them firm on the true foundation. But miserable are those, whose eyes are withheld, till the day of their visitation be overslipt, and so they continue keeping their corrupt standing, and confidence in their fleshly knowledg of Scriptures, for they also must fall, but their fall will be otherwise.

Mind therefore this my single hearted advice.

Let thy Religion be to feel the pure principle of life in the pure vessel of life, for the eye must be pure that sees the life, and the heart that receives it. And faith is a pure mystery, and it is only held in a pure conscience. Know that in thee that purifies thee, and then thou knowest Christ, and the Father and the Spirit: and as that lives and grows up in thee, so shalt thou know their dwelling place, and partake of their life and fulnesse.

THE END.